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STATE FOR USAID
USAID FOR DCHA/OFDA CCHAN, ACONVERY, RTHAYER, AND RMT
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MARR, PREL, PINR, AMGT, EAID, AQ, LA, RP, TN, VM, WS

SUBJECT: MGEAP1: INDONESIA EARTHQUAKE HUMANITARIAN UPDATE #3

Summary

¶1. The September 30 earthquake damaged or destroyed approximately 210,000 houses and affected at least 1.2 million people. Field assessments conducted by the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) indicate needs for food, safe drinking water, and shelter interventions. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has issued preliminary findings of the October 1 to 5 joint humanitarian needs assessment. USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) has received proposals and anticipates receiving additional proposals. End summary.

Number of People Affected

¶2. The U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the earthquake affected 1.2 million people in Padang District, according to U.S. Embassy staff in Padang.

USAID/DART Field Assessments

¶3. The USAID/DART continues to conduct field assessments. On October 8, the USAID/DART program officer and field officer are in Padang Pariaman and Adam districts, assessing humanitarian access, determining priority needs of earthquake-affected families, and examining potential geographic gaps in the humanitarian response to date.

-- Food and Nutrition --

¶4. The USAID/DART has investigated rumors of shortages of food and medicine in one subdistrict and noted that supplies of medicine are sufficient. According to the USAID/DART, food is one of the priority needs of individuals in earthquake-affected areas. The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) has redirected \$3 million in food assistance from Aceh to Padang.

¶5. Preliminary assessments conducted by the USAID/DART indicate that the price of noodles, one of the staple foods, and the price of water sold from water vendors are increasing, with the price of noodles increasing more than 60 percent since the earthquake. The increase in the cost of food and water raises concerns about potential food insecurity due to lack of access. Populations in affected areas were able to plant the recent rice crop, however, and the agricultural season is still on track, without any significant interruption.

-- Health --

¶6. Preliminary assessments by the USAID/DART indicate that the price of cooking fuel has not increased since the earthquake. This trend is significant, given the longstanding tradition in West Sumatra of boiling piped water -- which comes from shallow aquifers, susceptible to contamination -- to make contaminated water safe for drinking. Families that lack money to purchase fuel are instead burning wood and are thus able to maintain this habit, which protects individuals from water-borne disease.

-- Water and Sanitation --

¶7. The USAID/DART is investigating rumors of water shortages at hospitals in and around Padang. The USAID/DART is working to ascertain whether area hospitals are facing water shortages and, if so, whether shortages were a result of the earthquake or existed prior to September 30.

-- Shelter and Settlements --

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¶8. The USAID/DART is investigating a report from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) of an informal settlement of approximately 2,000 people in Padang District. The USAID/DART will ascertain why individuals in this settlement were unable to return to points of origin. The vast majority of earthquake-affected populations have remained at points of origin and have not been displaced to informal settlements. The trend to stay in areas of origin -- even if houses are damaged or uninhabitable -- reduces humanitarian needs and facilitates the humanitarian community's response to existing needs, as long as the area is accessible via ground transport.

¶9. As reported by OCHA on October 7, the Government of Indonesia (GoI) confirmed that the quake severely damaged 102,046 houses, inflicted moderate damage on 49,864 houses, and slightly damaged 54,606 houses. In addition, staff from the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta reported that the earthquake damaged or destroyed at least 2,580 religious venues in West Sumatra.

¶10. The USAID/DART has noted that as of October 6, humanitarian agencies working to respond to the earthquake had distributed a total of 10,500 tarpaulins, 2,250 tents, and 47 shelter-in-a-box sets, out of a total 57,600 tarpaulins, 30,000 shelter kits, 774 shelter-in-a-box sets, 13,900 tents, and 13,020 emergency shelters planned for distribution.

¶11. The USAID/DART has received reports that the GoI plans to provide cash assistance to families whose houses were damaged or destroyed by the earthquake. The GoI plans to provide IDR 5 million (\$530) to families whose houses were slightly damaged, IDR 10 million (\$1,060) to families with moderately damaged houses, and IDR 15 million (\$1,590) to families whose houses were severely damaged. These funds are designed to supplement families' available resources to repair or rebuild. A USAID/OFDA shelter and settlements specialist, who is tentatively planning to deploy to Indonesia to join the USAID/DART, will examine options for temporary and transitional shelter, in conjunction with shelter cluster partners, including the GoI.

Joint Humanitarian Needs Assessment

¶12. From October 1 to 5, U.N. agencies and NGOs conducted a rapid joint needs assessment. On October 7, OCHA summarized the results of the assessment.

-- Livelihoods and Agriculture: The quake damaged some fish landing centers, auction halls, and irrigation canals.

-- Food Security and Nutrition: The humanitarian community expects the need for rice stocks to increase and is prioritizing procuring rice and obtaining funding to support complementary food supplies.

-- Health: Mobile clinics are needed to treat injured persons, particularly in rural areas. The humanitarian community is concerned about the health status of the affected population due to high rates of respiratory infections and diarrhea and high levels of stress.

-- Shelter and Non-Food Items: The majority of affected populations are living in close proximity to damaged houses and urgently require emergency shelter and relief items.

-- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): Affected populations require safe drinking water transported by bowers. Additional bowers and storage capacity are needed to meet SPHERE standards for drinking, cooking, and basic hygiene. An estimated 200,000 people require access to basic water supplies and sanitation and hygiene services, according to participants in the joint humanitarian assessment.

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Humanitarian Response Plan

¶13. The U.N. is planning to release the Humanitarian Response Plan on October 9, and USAID/DART and Mission staff will attend the release. Similar to a U.N. flash appeal, the plan will summarize humanitarian needs and request assistance from the international community.

USAID/OFDA Humanitarian Assistance

¶14. The USAID/DART is reviewing proposals and anticipates receiving additional proposals from potential partners.

DoD Earthquake Response

¶15. On October 7, during the first day of operation, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Humanitarian Assistance Rapid Response Team (HARRT), or mobile medical unit, treated more than 100 patients in Padang. DoD anticipates that the number of patients treated per day will increase as word spreads about the medical unit. Families of patients and administrators of a nearby hospital stated that they were very pleased with the field hospital, and local media provided positive coverage of the field hospital's activities.

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Transition from Emergency to Reconstruction and Rehabilitation
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¶15. As reported by the U.N., the Humanitarian Response Plan, which supports the GoI's humanitarian response efforts, will last for 90 days. The GoI has declared that the emergency phase will last for one month, followed by the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase that is planned to commence on November 1 and last until March 2010.

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